

# The Birmingham Society

## FOR

### CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION.

FIRST INSTITUTED NOVEMBER 20, 1792.

SOME persons having industriously branded this society with the opprobrious epithets of riotous, tumultuous, and disloyal, and as having a tendency to breed anarchy and confusion, we therefore feel it a duty we owe to ourselves and to the public, to stand forwards to defend ourselves from such malicious and defamatory assertions; and freely declare in the most unequivocal manner, that we love our Sovereign, and venerate our Constitution, and we shew our loyalty to the one and our approbation of the other, not by disorderly meetings and drunken toasts, but by an orderly and strict observance of the laws of the land.

Our society is composed of peaceable men, who meet together for the purpose of receiving and giving instruction on political affairs, according to a law made in parliament called the "BILL OF RIGHTS," for the protection of the persons and property of the people so meeting upon any lawful occasion; and whoever infringes this law by injuring the person or property of any such person or persons so assembling, may be deemed a rioter and disorderly person, and is liable to be punished accordingly.

We meet together according to a plan laid down by the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt, and a great number of the most respectable characters in the kingdom, to watch the conduct of parliament, to investigate the laws and policy of our country (well knowing those laws are not good which will not bear a candid discussion) and to mark the speeches of placemen and pensioners, who say, "you (the people) have no right to meddle with politics or to think for yourselves. Leave that to your betters, pay your taxes quietly, and we will think for you;—we are very well as we are; we want no reform; innovations are dangerous."

We meet to obtain in a peaceable and legal manner, an equal representation of the people, and to re-establish annual Parliaments, which we think the only means of fixing our liberty on a sure basis, and to ensure this great blessing to our posterity; because we think it to be the most likely means of lessening the enormous load of taxes under which the nation have long groaned, and to do away the abuses and corruptions which all well-informed persons know are crept into the state; and the only sure method of putting a stop to Borough selling and bribery.

We disclaim every idea of self-interest independent of that of the people, well knowing that the friends of the people say, "think for yourselves; judge for yourselves; you ought to know what is your interest;" and it is now generally known that government was made by and for the use of the people.

We are of no party nor do we support any party spirit; we have no prejudice against any man on account of his religious or political mode of thinking; but feel ourselves bound to support universal liberty of conscience, and hold out the right-hand of fellowship to all mankind.

We set ourselves against all manner of riots and tumults; and call upon the public to join our exertions in doing away every appearance of it.

In this our lawful and well meant undertaking we will steadily and uniformly proceed, and never give up the public cause till we have obtained such a full and adequate representation as shall speak the will of the people in parliament faithfully, and shall defend the rights of every Briton.

The above declarations of our sentiments and actions will, we think, be a sufficient answer to every illiberal objection made against us, and stop that fermentation in the minds of the people of this place, occasioned by the activity of a prevailing party spirit.

We anticipated the good intentions of the association of *Loyal True Blues* (as they call themselves) who promised by advertisements and hand-bills to protect the liberty and property of his Majesty's subjects, and promote the peace of this place. How far they have performed their promise, the proceedings of Monday night the third of December will testify. It is too notorious that a large party of the society committed many depredations on the property of several of his Majesty's peaceable subjects, and disturbed the peace of the town at large. But what else can be expected from hirelings and rioters?—That the deluded multitude may see these errors and recognize their best friends, is the sincere wish of the friends of the people.

We now invite every impartial liberal minded man of every sect and denomination, to join us in a work so truly great, benevolent, and praise worthy, by becoming a member of this society.—And that the poor and the working mechanic may receive the benefit of this society, we here inform them, that there is to be spent only Three-pence every fortnight, and the contribution-money will not amount to above One Penny more.

*God Save the King.*